



# Small Planet Montessori

education for a peaceful planet

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The blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) is the largest animal that ever lived. An adult can grow nearly as long as three school buses and weigh over 400,000 pounds—as much as 24 African elephants.

Being big has its advantages. Large whales are safe from most predators and their massive bodies retain heat well—a bonus in chilly ocean waters.

But enormous creatures also have to eat enormous quantities. Amazingly, the blue whale maintains its bulk on a diet of mostly shrimp-like krill.

Blue whales are difficult to study because they spend so little time at the surface and migrate to remote waters. So as big as these animals are, we still know remarkably little about how they live.

## Blue Whale Fast Facts

☀ Size: 7 meters (23 feet) at birth; adults grow to 23–30 m (70–98 ft).

☀ Food: mostly krill

☀ Life Span: unknown, perhaps 40-80 years

☀ Closest Relatives: fin whale

☀ The blue whale is one of the loudest animals, with vocalizations that can travel thousands of miles underwater.

☀ Hear a blue whale: <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/02fire/background/hydroacoustics/media/blue.html>

Source: American Museum of Natural History  
[www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org)

## Dear Parents,

HAPPY NEW YEAR! We hope you had a great time over the holidays and your little learners are rested and ready to get back to work! With the cold weather our feathered friends who winter-over will be needing your help. Putting some food out for them can make all the difference. See page two for some tips and recipes.

## Whales, Krill, and Antarctica

JANUARY WORKS — This month it's krill (invertebrate of the month) and whales! (vertebrate of the month).



Fittingly, we are studying Antarctica. It is the southernmost and coldest continent and includes the South Pole (brrrr). It is divided by the Transantarctic Mountains. On average, it is the coldest, driest, and windiest continent and has the

highest average elevation of all the continents.

Antarctica is the third-smallest continent before Europe and Australia; 98% of it is covered in ice. There are no permanent human residents and Antarctica has never had an indigenous population.

Only cold-adapted plants and animals survive there, including penguins, fur seals, mosses, lichens, and many types of algae.

The name 'Antarctica' comes from the Greek *antarktikos*, meaning 'opposite to the Arctic'. (source-Wikipedia)

## Small Planet Business

**Tuition** — A full month's tuition is due on the first of every month. **Please make checks payable to Martha Morgan.**

Morning lessons are from 9.00–11.30 and afternoon lessons 1.00–3.30. There is 15 minutes before and after class for drop-off/pick-up. Please observe these times.

**Tiny Treasures** — Any works at home? Bring 'em on back!

**Guest Speakers** — If you would like to share a special interest, hobby or holiday

tradition, please have a word with Martha! The children really love to hear about special ways to celebrate!

**Veronique** — Every Thursday, 1–2 p.m. \$10.

**Snack** — Is it your snack day? Please swap with someone if you're going to miss your child's day.

**Lunch Card** — Please remember to keep your lunch card up to date! 20 lunches for \$200.00. Extra time will be charged at \$12.50 per hour.

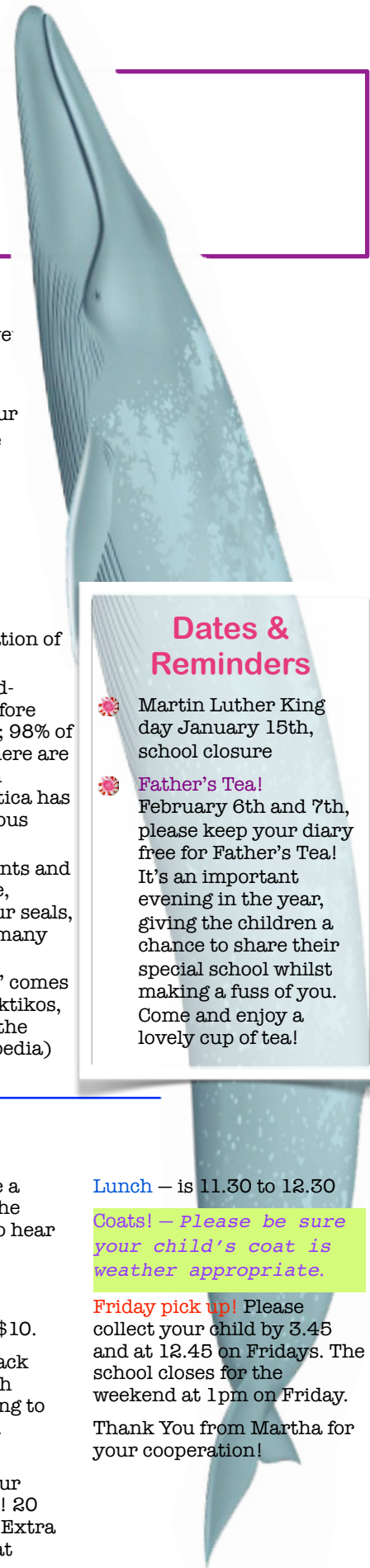
**Lunch** — is 11.30 to 12.30

**Coats!** — *Please be sure your child's coat is weather appropriate.*

**Friday pick up!** Please collect your child by 3.45 and at 12.45 on Fridays. The school closes for the weekend at 1pm on Friday.

Thank You from Martha for your cooperation!

*See you at the gate! — Martha.*



# For the Birds

## Seed

Seeds are the most common food provided at feeding stations. They are rich in carbohydrates and calories and supply valuable energy during cold weather. However, many seeds and grains in commercial mixes—millet, oats, flax, and wheat—are ignored and scattered on the ground by most birds while searching for seeds they like. This creates a mess, increases your feeding costs, and can attract rats and mice. Mixes with unattractive seeds should be avoided.

The best all-around seed that meets the needs of most seed-eating birds is black oil-type sunflower seed. Thistle seed, also called niger, is generally eaten only by siskins and goldfinches, but they love it!

It's best to avoid mixtures and to buy seed varieties separately. You can put each in different feeders so the birds can choose their favorite. You can find seeds at feed stores, large hardware stores, and stores that cater to bird enthusiasts.

## Suet

During the winter months, many insect-eating birds are forced to change their eating habits to include seeds and fruits. Suet provides an alternate source of food for these birds. Suet can be obtained at grocery stores and meat markets, often free of charge. Prepared and packaged suet is fairly inexpensive and available from many stores. Suet, either "straight" or mixed with other ingredients, can be put in wire mesh feeders or smeared into suet logs and crevices of pinecones.



## Favorite Suet Recipes

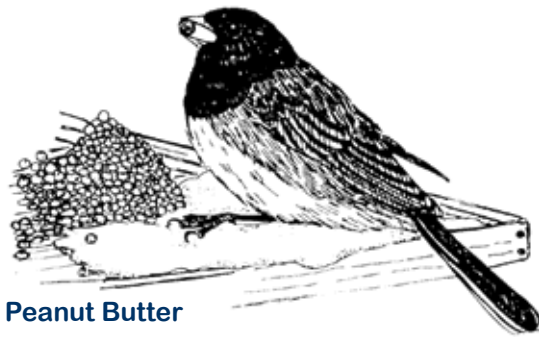
Basic formula

- ✿ Heat to boiling 1 part suet and 6 parts water.
- ✿ Add 2 parts cornmeal, 1/2 part flour, 1 part brown sugar.
- ✿ Cool, pour into cupcake molds, and allow to harden.

A standard mix

- ✿ Twice melt 2 parts suet, allowing it to harden between melts.
- ✿ Blend in 1 part yellow cornmeal and 1 part peanut butter.
- ✿ Allow to thicken, pour into molds and allow to harden.

The relative proportions of these ingredients may vary depending on your preferences. Refrigerate all leftover mixtures.



## Peanut Butter

Kids aren't the only ones who love peanut butter. When mixed with other foods, it provides a less expensive meal than nuts. In winter when protein and fat are scarce, peanut butter is a valuable addition to a bird's diet. Try mixing peanut butter, crumbs, and raisins with melted suet for a meal-in-one "bird cake" which appeals to a variety of birds.

## Fruits

This specialty item can often attract birds that otherwise aren't interested in your feeders. Waxwings, robins, and thrushes may visit a feeding station if fruit or berries are offered. Fresh or dried apples, blueberries, cherries, cranberries, currants, dates, oranges, grapes and raisins are popular

## Bakery Goods (not good!)

Bread, crackers, and doughnuts should be avoided. Often they attract starlings, house sparrows, and pigeons which can quickly become nuisances or harm our native birds. Bakery goods will also attract rats and mice if too much is provided for birds.

Please visit Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife:

[www.wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/backyard/](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/backyard/)